

no COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

William, and has used their stones like a
man of true
genius/¹ When Macaulay describes the
sufferings of
William's army at the siege of Limerick he
says : ' The
autumnal rain had begun to fall. The
soldiers in the
trenches were up to their knees in mire. No
precaution
was neglected : but, though drains were dug
to carry off
the water, and though pewter basins of
usquebaugh and
brandy blazed all night in the tents, cases of
fever had
already occurred/ In his footnote Macaulay
quotes
Corporal Trim as the authority for this
method of curing
the flux. In his account of the battle of
Steinkirk, Mac-
aulay quotes in a note Corporal Trim's
tribute to the
valiant behaviour of certain English
regiments, and his
opinion that they would go to heaven for it,² In
relating
William's defeat at Landen in 1693,
Macaulay cannot
refrain from referring to Uncle Toby's
praise of the
courage with which the King strove to rally
his broken
troops.³ ' See also the glowing description of
Sterne who,
no doubt, had many times heard the battle
fought over by
old soldiers. It was on this occasion that
Corporal Trim
was left wounded on the field, and was
nursed by the
Begaine/ Finally when Macaulay, in his
narrative of
the siege of Namur, has to describe one of
the many
assaults on the besieged city, he adds in a

footnote, ' It
was in the attack of July 5th that Captain
Shandy received
the memorable wound in his groin/ ⁴

Macaulay obviously assumed that his
readers were
familiar with the classics of English literature
and needed
only to be reminded of what they had read.
Hence,
Instead of using facts of history to make
fiction seem true,
as a novelist does, he uses fiction to make
historical

¹IV, 1919 (xvi).

² V, 2238-40 (xix).

³ V, 2360, n. (xx).

* V, 2525, n. (xxi).